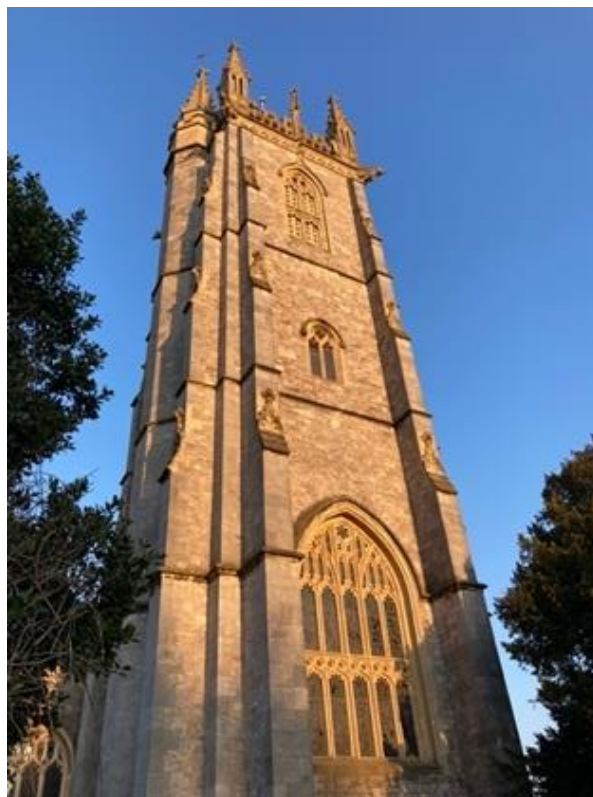




Director of Music



St Michael and All Angels' Church, Heavitree, Exeter

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Welcome from the Team Rector

Father Ben Rabjohns

Thank you for your interest in the position of Director of Music at St Michael and All Angels' Church in Heavitree. St Michael's is the largest of three churches in the Benefice of Heavitree and St Mary Steps – two parishes which work together in the central and eastern part of Exeter. The Parish of Heavitree, of which St Michael's is the parish church, covers a large part of the eastern side of the city and has a population of around 25,000 people. A smaller, daughter church – St Lawrence's – is on the eastern edge of the parish. St Mary Steps is a small, medieval church, serving a small parish in the city centre.

St Michael's church is in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England – with rich, liturgical worship and a congregation which appreciates good music as part of the liturgy. It is a diverse congregation – with a good range of ages, including good numbers of children and families. We are part of the Diocese of Exeter and receive the episcopal ministry of the Bishop of Oswestry. In the past there has been a good choral tradition here, with a robed choir of children and adults. The aim of this appointment is to revive that tradition. We would want the new Director of Music here to be someone with both the vision and the ability to recruit and train new members for the choir, both children and adults, and who would work with me, as the Rector, to develop a vision for music which would enhance our worshipping life.

Over the past year-and-a-half, we have been running Choir Church at the Church of England Primary School in our parish. This has given us inspiration in seeing how good music can inspire and engage young people and is one of the reasons why we would like our new Director of Music to be someone who could build on this by re-establishing a junior choir as part of the life of the parish church, enabling us to engage not just with children from the church school but from the wider parish as well.

The PCC has committed funding for an initial period of three years which, we hope, will enable a new Director of Music to rebuild the choral tradition here and begin to work with us to ensure the sustainability of that tradition beyond this initial period. We are beginning to look at grant funding already to enable that to happen. We feel that this is an exciting opportunity in the life of our parish, and hope that it is a prospect which excites and inspires you. Please be sure of our prayers as you consider making an application.



Ben Rabjohns, Rector of Heavitree and St Mary Steps.

Our Current Situation

Currently we have three committed members of the choir, all of whom can read music and sing well, and a Director of Music who has been at St Michael's for the past 20 years. The members of the choir do well in leading the congregational singing, including the use of responsorial psalms, and occasionally sing an anthem and are boosted by other singers for special occasions such as an ordination or the Christmas Carol Service.

Our main sung service is the 10.30am Sunday Mass which has a congregational Mass setting, hymns chosen from a range of sources, either a responsorial psalm or psalm sung to Anglican chant, and, occasionally, an anthem. Major feast days are usually celebrated with an evening Sung Mass. There are occasional services of Evensong during the year.

On this appointment being made our current Director of Music plans to retire to take up the post of Organist Emeritus – remaining available to play for Sunday services as required and for funerals and weddings. The person appointed would need to be happy with being part of enabling this transition.

Our Ambition for the Future

Our ambition is to establish a parish choir which sings good music to a high standard and which is an attractive and encouraging environment for both adults and children. Our aim is not to replicate a cathedral Choral Eucharist but for a high level of congregational participation in singing to remain, supported and enhanced by the choir. We are ready to work flexibly and creatively with the person appointed as to how this looks in practice.

We hope that existing members of the congregation might be encouraged to join the choir as this project takes shape but also that the choir might draw in others, both children and adults, who are not currently members of our worshipping community. We would hope for membership of the choir to provide a sociable and rewarding experience for the members, as well as the opportunity to beautify and enhance our worship.

Our Commitment

The funding we have committed over three years, we hope, enables us to:

- Offer the person appointed as Director of Music remuneration for 1.5 days per week to enable the work needed to build up and administer the choir.
- Offer five small choral scholarships which we hope will provide a solid basis of confident singers around which the choir can be built up.
- Alongside the music library we already have, appropriately resource the choir with music.



Our Next Director of Music

We will be looking for someone who is a skilled musician, creative with and knowledgeable about liturgical music, a competent organist and inspiring choral director, and, ideally, someone with a track record of growing a choral tradition and inspiring young people with a love of music. Beyond this, we are looking for someone who:

- Believes, as we do, that liturgical music is more than a performance but an expression of Christian faith and a resource to draw people into an encounter with God. Our prayer is that our church community will grow both in faith and in number and our Director of Music should share our vision that the choir is part of that mission.
- Is ready to work flexibly and creatively with us, and particularly with the Rector, in shaping a vision for the musical life of our church which enriches and enhances the worship which we offer. Someone who is collaborative, open to ideas and suggestions.
- Is inspired and excited by the challenge of building something from a low base, and is ready for recruiting both adults and children to the choir, with the ability to engage and inspire children with music.
- Will be proactive in working both with existing members of the choir and congregation, and with the community more widely (including local schools) to build up membership of the choir.
- Has a vision to make membership of the choir an experience which also builds up fellowship amongst the members so that there is an opportunity for the choir to be enjoyable sociably as well as musically.

Help and Support

We recognise that, particularly with the challenge of building something almost from scratch, this is a role which is demanding and may be challenging. The financial commitment which the PCC have made is a sign of our commitment to this project and you will, we hope, find St Michael's a friendly and supportive environment in which to work.

We hope that you will see yourself as a member of the church family here and be part of both the worshipping and the social life of the parish.

Obviously the relationship with the Rector will be a key one in this role. Fr Ben has been in Heavitree for three-and-a-half years and has worked consistently to build up the worshipping life at St Michael's with a vision for music as an integral part of this. As part of your role there will be the opportunity to meet regularly with him for support and discussion and he will be ready to share ideas, open to suggestions, and ready to help with recruitment – especially in terms of seeking to build relationships with local schools.

About St Michael's

- We are a parish church, serving the Parish of Heavitree which comprises a large and populous part of the city of Exeter, with a parish population of around 25,000 people. The majority of those who worship with us come from within the parish boundaries – though some travel from other parts of the city or further afield, either because of a personal connection to the church or because we are part of the Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda, set up to provide sacramental assurance to those unable to receive the ministry of women as priests and bishops.



- We are a church in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England with a commitment to rich and well-ordered liturgical worship. As a parish of The Society we are part of the Diocese of Exeter and under the pastoral and sacramental care of the Bishop of Oswestry. This, by no means, makes us closed off to the life of the wider Church of England – we play an active part in the Deanery and Diocese and are a worshipping community which is open to all, whatever their particular views on various issues over which the Church of England is divided. We aim to be a place where the Christian faith is taught faithfully, lived prayerfully and explored with a spirit of openness and enquiry.
- We have a thriving ministry to children and their families with a Sunday School, monthly Messy Church, and the Choir Church project in collaboration with St Michael's Church of England Primary School. We enjoy strong links with both St Michael's (primary) and St Peter's (secondary) Church of England schools, as well as some links with local community schools.
- Our Choir Church project has already begun to engage children with traditional choral music in our church school. The aim of Choir Church has been to recruit an after-school choir which learns music to sing for a monthly celebration of the Eucharist at the school. This has been a good experience and has funding in place to continue to the end of 2026.
- We have a Grade II* listed Victorian building which is a beautiful space for worship, and a place of prayer. We have plans to develop and restore the church building over the coming years, and are about to undertake work to allow us to leave the building open for prayer during the day. The church has a good acoustic for singing.
- We have a large three manual pipe organ – originally built by Hele & Co in 1896 and which has been regularly overhauled and significantly modernised during its lifetime. We also have a Broadwood grand piano.

Job Description

Director of Music – St Michael and All Angels’ Church, Heavitree

We are looking to recruit a faithful and experienced choral director and organist to rebuild and establish the choral tradition at St Michael’s Church in Heavitree. Over the next three years the Director of Music will work collaboratively with the Rector to develop a vision for the musical life at St Michael’s and will work to recruit to membership of the choir, including choral scholars, and strive for excellence in training the choir to sing.

Start date:	September 2025 (flexible)
Working days:	1.5 days per week to include Sunday morning for preparation, rehearsal and service singing. The rest of the time to be used flexibly to include time for a weekly choir rehearsal, weekday festival services, administration, preparation, and recruitment work.
Working commitment:	10.30am Sunday Mass with preparation and possibly rehearsal beforehand. Weekly choir practice (currently Friday evenings – but this is negotiable, particularly in terms of recruiting new members). Meetings with the Rector as required.
Salary:	£10,500 PA. Payable by monthly invoice as a self-employed musician.
Reports to:	The Rector
Safer Recruitment:	Enhanced DBS (Child and Adult Workforce)
Deadline:	18 July 2025
Interview:	30 July 2025

Job Overview

Overall Purpose

To work with the Rector to develop a musical vision for St Michael's Church over the next three years, training the existing members of the choir and recruiting new members, including choral scholars and a junior choir, to strive for excellence in music and worship, enabling people to encounter God through music and liturgy.

Duties and responsibilities

- Direct the choir – beginning with current members and working quickly to recruit to the choir – for Sundays and Festivals, and for weekly rehearsals maintaining a high standard of excellence, liturgical sensitivity, and discipline.
- Play the organ for voluntaries and accompanying services – or to ensure that a suitable organist is available to do so. This will include working collaboratively with our current Director of Music who will take on the post of Organist Emeritus.
- Work to recruit choral scholars for the choir – either from the university or local further education colleges / schools – ensuring that they are singers of good quality who will provide a firm foundation around which to build the choir.
- Work to recruit adult volunteers to the choir both from within our current worshipping community and beyond.
- Using connections with local schools – especially the church primary and secondary schools – and within our current congregation to recruit members for a junior choir.
- Work collaboratively with the Rector to develop the musical vision for St Michael's.
- Work with the Rector to determine the musical content of services meeting agreed deadlines for orders of service and termly music lists.
- Work with the Rector and the PCC to plan for the future sustainability of the musical tradition beyond the initial three years.
- Foster a positive, supportive, and sociable culture within the choir.
- Undertake administrative work including in relation to Safeguarding (as it relates to the choir), PRS and CCLI copyright licenses, organisation and updating of the music library.
- Ensure that the church's policies in relation to safeguarding are followed and implemented.
- Undertake the safeguarding training which is required for the role.
- Provide an annual report to the PCC.
- Have due regard and care for all equipment, robes, and music relating to the choir including the church organ and pianos.
- Carry out other duties as may reasonably be required by the PCC.

Regular services and rehearsals

Sunday	10.30am Sung Mass
Friday	6.30pm Choir Practice (the timing of this is negotiable, particularly if a different time would help in terms of choir recruitment).

Targets we would hope could be achieved (based on a September start)

January 2026	Choral scholars recruited and ready to start.
Easter 2026	To have recruited a number of adult volunteer choristers.
September 2026	For a junior choir to have been established.

Person Specification

Essential

- A person of Christian faith with a desire to use music to enable others to encounter God in worship.
- A person who is able to work with and inspire both children and adults in order build new relationships in the communities which the church serves and is ready to collaborate beyond the church community – reaching out to schools, colleges, university, and the wider community.
- A warm, genuine and generous personality that inspires and encourages others.
- A collaborative and imaginative approach; willing to contribute ideas and learn from others and work to create a shared vision.
- Committed to excellence while ready to take risks, embrace new ideas, and nurture and encourage those with varying levels of musical ability.
- Self-motivated and able to maintain high levels of energy and ambition for the success of the project.

Competencies and Skills

Essential

- Highly able choir director and organist.
- Ability to inspire singers, both young and old, with varying degrees of musical ability, to help them realise their full potential.
- Excellent communicator.
- An ability to work flexibly and creatively with a diverse range of adults and children from a wide range of backgrounds.
- Able to articulate the power and potential of music within the liturgy to enrich worship and enable people to encounter God.

Desirable

- Competent user of MS Office and standard music software packages.
- Confident user of social media to engage wider audiences and particularly to promote the choir.

Qualification and Experience

Essential

- Music degree, or equivalent qualification / experience.
- Experience of directing choirs in a liturgical context.

Desirable

- Experience of recruiting to and growing a choir, including working with musicians of differing abilities.
- Experience of recruiting and training a children's choir.

Knowledge and Understanding

Essential

- Good knowledge of the choral and organ repertoire.
- Sound understanding of the Anglican liturgical tradition / church year and appropriate music within it.
- Good understanding of the principles of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and willingness to develop a thorough working knowledge of safeguarding.

Desirable

- Knowledge or experience of the Anglo-Catholic tradition of worship.

Special Requirements

- Willing and able to work flexibly, recognising that Church life does not fit within normal office hours.

Terms and Conditions

- The Director of Music will be self-employed.
- Working days include Sunday mornings and the day of the choir rehearsal with other time to be used flexibly at the post-holder's discretion.
- Times of absence to be arranged in agreement with the Rector, with suitable cover arranged by the post-holder if necessary.
- Funding enables this post to be available for three years initially.
- It is a genuine occupational requirement that the post-holder should be a Christian.

Application Process, Deadline and Interview

1. Complete and return the application form, along with a covering letter which outlines your interest in, and suitability for, the role.
2. Submit a video clip of you directing a choir performance or leading a rehearsal.
3. Interviews will be held at St Michael's Church on Wednesday 30 July 2025 (this date can be flexible depending on the availability of candidates).

Please submit your cover letter, completed application form, and the video clip to Fr Ben Rabjohns: heavitreeparish@gmail.com by 5.00pm on Friday 18th July.